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ABSTRACT

The resource guide for teachers of English as a second language (ESL) to young children of non-literate parents presents basic principles underlying the development of literacy in young second language learners and provides some practical suggestions for teaching reading and writing using the whole language approach. This approach uses different teaching methods and strategies. After an introductory section on second language learning and literacy in young children, the guide describes whole language methods for classroom use. The methods are presented in two groups: those that promote second language reading, and those promoting second language writing. Techniques presented include the language experience approach, shared reading with big books (i.e., books written specifically for children in enlarged print), sustained silent reading, dictated stories, creative writing, story completion, and dialogue journals. Specific classroom procedures and some charts are included. (MSE)

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Teacher Resource Guide

Developing Literacy in English as a Second Language: Guidelines for Teachers of Young Children from Non-Literate Backgrounds

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Preface

Teacher Resource Guides have been submitted to NCBE by practitioners involved in teacher education, research, and the education of language minority students. These Guides are intended to be practical resource guides on current or innovative teaching practices in bilingual education and in the education of limited-English-proficient students. Every effort has been made to cull the most practical aspects of each curriculum guide and to incorporate these into a concise classroom resource with sample lesson plans or activities.

This year's NCBE Teacher Resource Guide Series revolves around literacy instruction and the integration of language and content-area instruction, areas of particularly high interest to practitioners in the field. Specifically, the four 1987 Guides address: (1) developing materials and activities for promoting English language and literacy skills among young children from non-literate backgrounds; (2) integrating native language, ESL, and content-area instruction in science and math; (3) developing literacy materials and integrating language and content instruction for limited-English-proficient students with limited formal schooling experience; and (4) integrating English as a second language (ESL) instruction with content-area instruction in science and math.

Lorraine Valdez Pierce
Teacher Resource Guide Series
Compiler/Editor

Introduction

Awareness of literacy comes naturally to children raised in a literate home, but this natural emergence of literacy may be out of reach for children who come from non-literate backgrounds. The need for literacy to emerge in this natural way is crucial in light of the fact that the introduction to literacy in school through traditional methods not only does not encourage the natural evolution of reading and writing, it sometimes counteracts it. The failure of traditional second language teaching methods in promoting literacy among children from non-literate or low-literacy backgrounds has caused many teachers to turn to more innovative methods that take into account the child's total language needs and that promote the enjoyment of reading and writing. A whole language approach to teaching literacy in the second language does just that, and since it includes the use of different methodologies and strategies, it has an added flexibility that allows teachers to find the combination of activities with which they feel most comfortable.

This Teacher Resource Guide presents basic principles underlying the development of literacy in young second language learners and provides some practical suggestions for teaching reading and writing using a whole language approach. The guide was originally developed for English as a second language (ESL) teachers in a program which prepares Southeast Asian refugee children for elementary schools in the U.S. The program, called Preparing Refugees for Elementary Programs (PREP), is funded by the U.S. Department of State and operates in the Philippines Refugee Processing Center in Bataan, The Philippines. PREP's goal is to prepare Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese refugee children between the ages of 6 and 11 for school in the U.S. by helping them develop the linguistic, academic, and interpersonal skills needed for successful entry into elementary classrooms. The program devotes 30 minutes of each school day to reading activities and 30 minutes to writing activities in addition to instruction in ESL. This is based on the belief that children need to spend an uninterrupted chunk of time reading children's literature and communicating their ideas, thoughts, and feelings through written language. These 30-minute periods are dedicated to celebrating the joy of reading and writing. Although the activities and suggestions in this guide were developed for teachers in the PREP program, they can be used by any teacher working with young learners in any second language classroom.

How Children Learn to Read and Write

Most children in literate societies are introduced to reading in a very special way--by seeing a parent immersed in the act of reading and through "story-time," an immensely enjoyable experience shared by parent and child. By having a model who obviously values reading, children eventually learn to value reading themselves. By sharing "story-time" with a loved one, children eventually learn two very important things about reading. First, they learn that reading is enjoyable and rewarding. Second, they learn that print is simply a representation of speech. Children in literate environments also

develop the ability to write quite naturally, and they seem to have an intrinsic desire to produce "written language". Their initial attempts at writing take the form of squiggles and lines; these eventually turn into pictorial representations and forms that look like words. This is the stage that some researchers call mock writing (Graves, 1983). At a later stage, children invent their own spelling, and do so systematically and in a rule-governed manner.

Three principles emerge in the development of literacy in young children:

1. Introduction to literacy must be meaningful (Goodman, 1986). Children should be able to predict what lies ahead when reading or being read to by the rich context that is provided by good reading material. Reading something that makes sense is much easier than reading something that does not! Similarly, children should begin to write for a meaningful purpose--expressing a thought or feeling. Writing to communicate is much easier than writing for no obvious intrinsic reason.

2. The link between oral language and print is easier to make when awareness of it emerges naturally rather than when that link is explicitly taught. Children seem to pick up the association between symbols and sounds rather easily from their environment. In contrast, when rules that govern written language are formally taught to children, the process is a tedious one that is not always highly successful (Holdaway, 1979).

3. Affect plays an invaluable role in reading and writing. A child who enjoys reading is motivated to read, will read more, and by doing so, will be a better reader. Similarly, a child who enjoys reading is motivated to write, will write more, and by doing so, will become a better writer. Since reading and writing are interrelated, writing frequently improves reading and vice versa (Smith, 1978).

How Children Develop Literacy in a Second Language

Developing literacy in a second language (L2) follows the same principles as the development of literacy in a first language. A student learning to read and write in ESL needs to be introduced to literacy in a meaningful way, to make the link between oral language and print as naturally as possible, and to be given the opportunity to enjoy reading and writing. However, two additional factors may play a significant role in the development of literacy in L2: age and level of native language literacy. Age makes a difference in how L2 literacy develops: Older students, particularly those who are able to think logically about abstract notions (ages 11-15), are better prepared to focus on the form of language analytically, and as such, are better able to benefit from explanations of language rules and tasks that promote reading and writing simply for the sake of reading and writing. Younger students who are

unable to benefit from such instruction may actually be turned off by literacy and may develop negative attitudes toward reading and writing resulting in bad literacy habits.

Native language literacy also makes a difference in the way L2 literacy develops. Students already literate in their first language are able to transfer many of the skills they have attained through native language reading to the second language. They may not need to be led through the initial stages of literacy in which the awareness of the connection between oral language and print emerges; they would have already achieved this awareness in their native language and would transfer those skills, along with many others, to learning to read in the second language. With non-literate students, however, even those who are older, literacy must be allowed to emerge in the natural stages described earlier in this guide. Thus, with the exception of older literate students, teaching reading and writing in L2 must be based on the same principles that underlie the development of literacy in young children.

Failure of Traditional Teaching Methods to Develop Literacy in L2

Traditionally, reading in ESL has been taught through so-called "readers." Readers vary in the extent to which they incorporate different teaching methodologies, but they share a few common characteristics:

1. The focus of reading in ESL readers is usually on the act of reading itself rather than on the content of the reading material. This usually results in reading material that is not only uninteresting to children but oftentimes meaningless (Goodman, 1986); for example, this sequence from a Sullivan Reader: "A man can nap. A cat can nap. A man can nap in a pit. A cat can nap in a pan," etc., or this "story" from an ESL basal series: "Yesterday, the elephant drove her car to the beach. The bear flew his plane. He wore his glasses," etc. The reduced role that meaningful content plays in traditional ESL readers also creates an unusually tough burden on children whose cultural background differs significantly from that presented in the reading material.

2. Traditional ESL readers generally use phonics methods to teach reading. Phonics methods reduce reading (and writing) to a matter of matching letters with sounds (Goodman, 1986). Unfortunately, English is a language that does not have a very high ratio of symbol-to-sound correspondence. Many symbols represent more than one sound and, similarly, many sounds are represented by more than one symbol. In addition, it is so rare to have to rely purely on phonics rules to comprehend meaningful written language that it is almost not worth the time it takes to teach specific rules!

3. Visual recognition of words in isolation is also typical of traditional ESL readers. This not only makes the task of reading much more difficult than it needs to be, it also contradicts the way in which language evolves naturally in children. The idea that children begin with isolated words (parts) and put them together to make a whole is an illusion (Goodman, 1986).

   Children convey whole meaning even when they utter single words; thus, "up" may mean "I want to go upstairs," "pick me up" or even "put me down." Besides, unfamiliar words that occur in natural language are almost always recognized or understood through the context that they are in. Prediction of meaning and guessing the meaning of a particular word from the larger context, rather than the recognition of the visual configuration of isolated words, are skills that we need to encourage young L2 learners to develop.

4. Traditional ESL readers contain language that is so different from the learner's oral language both in form and in content that prediction of meaning by the learner is oftentimes impossible. More often than not, the child is given reading material that requires a significantly higher level of oral proficiency than the child is capable of.

Traditional methods of teaching writing in ESL also have their share of difficulties. Children are asked to trace and copy isolated letters and words--activities that do not have intrinsic communicative value. Additionally, children are explicitly discouraged from making errors; accurate spelling is one of the earliest goals in a traditional writing instruction program. Given that invented spelling is a stage through which the child naturally and necessarily passes, the use of traditional ESL literacy approaches and materials becomes questionable. First, these methods are not based on the natural way in which reading and writing specifically develop or on how language generally develops. Second, they strip the act of reading of meaning. Third, such methods do not build on the learners' oral language and consequently ignore the strong relationship that exists between oral and written language. Finally, they make reading and writing dull.

Using a Whole Language Approach to Teach Literacy in L2

In a whole language approach, instruction takes into account the whole learner and builds on his or her total array of skills and abilities (Goodman, 1986). The focus of instruction in the whole language approach is on meaning and not on language for its own sake. Thus, activities revolve around specific content in a real communicative situation and not around language in an abstract form. For example, children write letters to real people--an activity that has an authentic communicative function--rather than copying words or tracing letters--activities with no intrinsic communicative value. In a classroom environment that simulates the way that language is used in real

life, children are encouraged to take risks and to use language in all its varieties and at all levels of proficiency. Thus, the specific strategies and activities chosen to teach young L2 learners to become literate must have the following characteristics:

1. They must build on the child's oral language.

2. They must be intrinsically meaningful.

3. They must have communication as their primary purpose. Children must be given material that they are interested in reading about, and they must be given the task of writing about something they are interested in saying.

4. They must be motivating to children.

Whole Language Methods that Promote Reading in L2

Three methods that promote reading in ESL in a whole language approach are described below: The Language Experience Approach, Shared Reading with Big Books, and Sustained Silent Reading. Although all three of these methods are to be used to teach reading, they are not intended to be used together or at the same time. Teachers may begin with shared reading with big books for the first few weeks. They may introduce a Language Experience activity in the third or fourth week and review a big book for one or two days of that same week. It is likely that Sustained Silent Reading, which requires independent reading on children's part, will not begin until later in the school year.

The Language Experience Approach

One of the best ways to help students learning ESL make the transition from their oral language to standard printed English is the Language Experience Approach (LEA). The LEA is based on the notion that children are better able to read materials that stem from their own experience and are based on their own oral language. A large portion of the LEA involves eliciting oral language from children and shaping it in preparation for its use as written material. In fact, LEA is often used as a tool for developing oral language skills in L2.

LEA involves whole language by allowing children to read story units rather than isolated words or sentences. Reading materials produced through the LEA are natural, too, in that the only vocabulary controls in the material come from the limitations of each child's speaking vocabulary. Children are given reading material that they themselves compose orally, with the help of the teacher. What better way to ensure success in reading, especially for children who have limited proficiency in English, than allowing children to read their own oral language? This approach also ensures that the interrela-

tionship between oral and written language is made very clear to children in a natural way.

How To Do LEA: From Start To Finish

1. Choose a Concept or Topic

The topic of the LEA activity may be related to specific academic content areas such as science, social studies, health, math, or physical education, or it may be unrelated to any academic content area. The choice of a topic is determined by the objectives to be attained in a lesson.

2. Identify an Activity

The chosen activity must give students experiences that are sufficiently meaningful and interesting to engage their attention and to generate oral language. Stimuli may be inappropriate if objects are too valuable or easily damaged or if an activity is too complicated. In a bicultural or multicultural classroom, the choice of the activity must also take into account cultural parameters: The activity must not conflict with what is acceptable and what is not for a particular ethnic group. Activities must also be interesting to children and appropriate to their age.

3. Plan for Implementing the Activity

List all materials needed for the activity. Also, make sure that all concepts to be taught are listed, and think of ways in which they can be emphasized during the activity. Think about, and perhaps list, the core vocabulary and structures to be used and the language patterns that would fit naturally with the core vocabulary. This step is crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of the activity.

Plan who the participants will be. Although it is recommended that all students be actively involved, some activities will require a small number of participants, with the rest of the students acting as observers. Plan what the role of each student will be during and after the activity. Some activities may need to be broken into segments; if so, plan how long each segment will last. Plan where the activity will take place, and make sure that the setting is ready.

4. Conduct the Activity

Begin the activity by introducing the various components. This will generally ensure that at least some of the core vocabulary will be covered early on. Oral language must accompany as much of the activity as possible.

In the early stages of second language development, much of the talk will be generated by the teacher. In this stage, it is important to note that teacher-generated talk must reflect the "here and now." As soon as children are ready to produce language, the role of the teacher shifts from a generator of language to a mediator of language production for the students. Questions like these would be appropriate for an activity revolving around a monkey:

What is the monkey doing now?
What is Danh doing to the monkey?
Does the monkey like it? Why?
How do the monkey's hands feel when you touch them?

In the early stages of second language development, especially in a class where the majority of the children speak the same language, much of the chatter may be in the children's native language. Rather than trying to prevent children from using their native language, teachers should use the concrete actions involved in an activity to help the children associate their spontaneous utterances in the native language with their equivalents in English. This could be naturally accomplished by the teacher modeling after the child in English. When a child produces single-word utterances, the teacher can expand on those utterances. For example:

Teacher: Danh, what do you notice about the monkey's hands?
Danh: Small
Teacher: That's right! The monkey's hands are small.

The teacher's objectives during this step of the LEA should be to:

a. Encourage careful observation of the stimulus,
b. Elicit and extend oral language describing students' thoughts and observations, and
c. Encourage listening to and responding to classmates' observations (Nessel & Jones, 1981).

Active student participation is essential to making an activity effective: Give each student or pair of students a specific responsibility. Activities should be long enough to generate enough language but brief enough to keep interest high.

5. Clean-Up

This is a valuable time for continued language enrichment and responsibility building. The strategies suggested for conducting the activity, described in #4 above, apply to the clean-up process as well.

6. Debrief on the Activity

This serves both as a summary of the activity and as preparation for the story composition. Students are asked to recount the sequence of steps in the activity. The teacher, acting as mediator, questions and expands on student utterances. This step is very important in organizing the student's thoughts regarding the activity and in preparing them to write, either individually or in a group. To make the task easier, the teacher may write the list of core vocabulary on the board for inclusion in the story. A debriefing of about ten minutes is probably adequate to stimulate ideas prior to composing the story.

7. Compose a Language Experience Story

A written account should be obtained from students immediately after the debriefing is completed. The students may either dictate the story to a proficient writer or write it themselves, if they are able to. Students who are very limited in English proficiency may dictate the story to the teacher, either individually or in a group. If the story is to be the product of the whole class, elicit ideas and sentences individually from students, making sure that a correct sequence of events is followed. The teacher should have the necessary materials ready at this time. The following suggestions should help the procedure go smoothly:

a. Put the core vocabulary where it is visible to all students;
b. Use large (preferably lined) newsprint;
c. Attach the paper to a good writing surface; and
d. Use a soft crayon or a thick felt-tipped pen to write with and form the words neatly and clearly.

Always begin with a title, and if the group cannot produce one quickly, you may provide it for them rather than spend too much time on this task. There are two ways of taking dictation from students. The first is to write down whatever the children say in exactly the way they say it, and the second is to modify children's utterances minimally so as to make them conform to acceptable rules of written English. According to the first method, if a child is led to say, "Danh touch monkey," that is exactly what the teacher would write. According to the second method, the teacher may write: "Danh touched the monkey." For children who are learning ESL and who are limited in English proficiency, it may be better to use the second method, whereby children's utterances are modified slightly. Teachers must be careful that this is done in a rewarding and positive manner so as not to discourage the child. Students who are proficient writers of English may write their stories individually and then share them with others later on.

8. Read the Language Experience Story

The teacher reads each sentence immediately after it is written and then reads the entire story once to the class. After reading the entire story once, have the group read the story aloud together several times. Then encourage individual children to read aloud. Point to words as they are being read, either by the teacher, the group, or by an individual child. The teacher may underline the words that students are having difficulty with and may focus on those words for further development in various word study exercises. There is no magic number for how many words are chosen per story. For beginning level students, three to five words may be sufficient; for more advanced students, as many as fifteen words may be chosen.

9. Develop Follow-Up Activities

A minimum of five and a maximum of ten follow-up activities are suggested for use with any one experience story. The follow-up activities need not always be the same. They should be chosen with specific reading skills in mind. Some follow-up activities are teacher-directed in that the teacher controls and times the task, and in others, students work independently and pace themselves; they may even choose from among a number of follow-up activities. The following exercises are recommended:

a. Ask the children to find a particular word in the story: e.g., ask, "Who can find the word *soft*?" Choose a word that is easily visible.
b. If a word occurs more than once in the story, have children find it in as many places as they can. Choose words with high meaning value rather than function words such as articles and prepositions.
c. Point to a word in the dictated story. See if anyone can say it. If no one can, move the pointer to the first word in that sentence. Have the children read the whole sentence aloud, then point to the word again and ask what it is.
d. Have each student copy one word from the story on a card, and then have them arrange the cards so that they form the story.
e. Have students arrange the cards alphabetically.
f. Write a sentence from the story on the board, leaving out one or two selected words from the story. Have students identify and spell out the missing words.
g. Have students find words in the story with the same beginning sounds.

10. Evaluation

An easy way of assessing student progress is by using the follow-up activities listed above to monitor individual students' performance. For example,

if you choose follow-up activity "f," you may have each student work independently, collect the papers, and check the answers. Assessment should be done regularly, frequently, and preferably immediately following the completion of the LEA activity.

11. Exhibit Student Work

Make a classroom language experience library. Have students illustrate the story, and mount group or individual stories in a folder for all students to read.

Shared Reading With Big Books

Shared reading with big books refers to an approach where bedtime story reading or sharing a story with a child on a parent's lap is simulated in the classroom with a group of children. Through the use of high-interest stories written specifically for children in enlarged print, every child in the classroom can share in the process of hearing and seeing a story unfold. Reading good children's literature is the center of this instructional program. Children participate in any way they like: as listeners, as choral readers, or as individual readers. This approach is particularly useful for children from non-literate backgrounds who have not been introduced to literacy in that natural, enjoyable way that most children in a literate society are.

Shared reading relies on children's natural search for meaning. By the very nature of the situation, an adult reading a story to a child is a shared experience that invites participation by children. When listening to a favorite story that is read often, children will usually join in the reading in any way that is comfortable to them. They may mumble along with the expert reader (teacher), with mumbles eventually turning into recognizable words, or they may echo-read, repeating parts of the story as it is being read.

How To Conduct Shared Reading

1. Choose A Big Book

Choose either a commercially-made book or one that has been hand-made by you, your class, or another teacher (see Page 23 of this guide for instructions on how to make your own Big Book). The topic of the story may or may not be related to the topic being covered at that particular time in other class activities. For example, if the topic of ESL lessons for a given week is "animals," you may choose *The Farm Concert* (from the Wright Group) as the Big Book to read that week. On the other hand, do not feel compelled to fit all Big Books into the general structure of the ESL curriculum.

2. Plan for Reading the Book

List all the additional materials needed to prepare the children for reading or for activities following the shared reading. You may also want to list the core vocabulary to reinforce throughout the book.

3. Read the Story to Children

Gather the children around you. Sometimes the easiest and most comfortable way to do a shared reading session is to sit on the floor (mat) with the children grouped around you. First, introduce the story by talking about it and introducing the main characters. You may do this by pointing to the pictures in the book or by acting out the story with the help of any props you may have. Then, with the help of a pointer (a pencil or a ruler will do), read the story. Make sure to point to each word as it is being read, but do not let the pointing detract from the natural rhythm of the language. It is really important to maintain the intended intonation and rhythm for making the story most enjoyable for children.

4. Reread the Story and Ask Comprehension Questions

After reading through the story once, go back and read it once more, this time stopping to check for comprehension. At the early stages of language development, when the children still have very limited proficiency in English, you may have to do most of the talking and will have to ask questions that allow children to respond nonverbally. For example, while reading *Dan, the Flying Man* (from the Wright Group), you might ask children at the preproduction stage to point to Dan in a picture. For children who are at the early production stage, you might ask "What did Dan fly over?" while pointing to the picture of the house.

5. Students Echo-Read

This is usually done the day after the story has been read. You read the story in its entirety again, and then invite children to echo-read, that is, to repeat after you one or two sentences at a time.

6. Group Reading

If the students are ready, invite them to read the story aloud. Do not force any individual child to join in the group reading, but make sure that everyone is paying attention to the story.

7. Pair or Small Group Reading

If the students are ready, pair them up and give each pair either the Big Book that the class has been reading or the small-size version of the same book, if it is available. Have each student in each pair be the reader once and the listener once. Small groups of three or four students could also be formed, and each child could take turns being the reader.

8. Develop Follow-Up Activities

If the follow-up is done on a subsequent day, you need to start by reading the story in its entirety to the class, as described in #3. The follow-up activities suggested for LEA could also be used with shared reading. It is imperative that children be allowed to do some "fun" activities as follow-up to shared reading. The following activities are appropriate:

a. Have groups of children dramatize the story and act it out as it is read aloud.
b. Have children individually, or in pairs, illustrate the story or interpret it visually in their own way. Have an exhibit of students' artwork in a prominent place, preferably where others can see it.
c. Have children compose a variation on the story after discussing it in a group. With your help as writer, have the class make a big book of their own.

9. Expert Reading Time

Choose a child or ask for a volunteer to be the "Expert Reader." As this is a very important role for all children to play, make sure that each child, at some point during the school year, gets to be an expert reader. Early on, choose (or lead them to volunteer!) the more fluent children, and hopefully, by the end of the school year, all children will feel comfortable enough to be the expert reader.

Role-playing as teacher is a valuable activity that allows children to develop many skills that come from being a role model. It is important that the expert reader be allowed to read the story any way he or she likes. Thus, if the story reads, "Did you ride my donkey?" and the child says "Did you go and ride the donkey?" that should be acceptable. It is very likely, though, that even if you don't correct a child, the other children will, in which case it is entirely up to the expert reader to accept the modification or to reject it. As a general rule of thumb, any attempts at reading should be rewarded. A child who stumbles on a word can be provided with the word gently, without fuss and without emphasis. If a child insists on being the expert reader and

is unable to read, he should not be admonished. Instead, the child should be allowed to tell the story in his own words, or even act it out.

10. Evaluation

As with LEA, evaluation and constant monitoring of progress is of utmost importance. The easiest way to keep track of how children are doing in the shared reading experience is to rate the children's behavior during the session. You may use the checklist on Page 14 (Form A) to keep a record of students' performance.

Sustained Silent Reading

The third component of a whole language literacy program is one that allows students to enjoy reading their favorite books on their own and at their own pace. This experience provides an opportunity for children to view reading and writing as something to be enjoyed rather than something that causes stress, anxiety and possibly even embarrassment. Allotting school time for children to simply read whatever they want and for no other reason than enjoyment is especially important for children who do not live in a highly literate home environment and who do not spend much, if any, time at home reading for pleasure. Thus, in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), a chunk of time is set aside during which everyone in class, including the teacher, picks a book of his or her own choice and reads silently.

<u>How to do SSR</u>

1. Plan for the SSR Period

Make sure that there are enough books for all the children in the class. Some children may want to read the books that the teacher read earlier, while others may prefer books with which they are unfamiliar. Some children may choose to read a Big Book on their own; others may opt for a regular-size book.

2. Set Up Your Classroom for SSR

Children need to be physically comfortable when reading for pleasure. Lay a mat on the floor so that children will be able to lie or sit on the floor if they wish. Children should be able to sit and read anywhere they like in the classroom. We recommend that you give up your "teacher's chair" for this portion of the day and find somewhere else to lounge around while reading.

FORM A

EVALUATION OF SHARED READING PERFORMANCE
(The GRAPE Scale)

Student Name	Big Book ( ):					Big Book ( ):					Big Book ( ):					Big Book ( ):					Big Book ( ):				
	G	R	A	P	E	G	R	A	P	E	G	R	A	P	E	G	R	A	P	E	G	R	A	P	E
1																									
2																									
3																									
4																									
5																									
6																									
7																									
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Dimensions

G- Generally enthusiastic
R- Reading along
A- Attentiveness
P- Participating
E- Expert reading

Rate the GRAPE dimensions along the following scale:

1- Not able to/not at all
2- Adequate
3- Very well/very much so
NA- Not Applicable

3. Have Each Person in Class Pick Material to Read

Children may decide to read alone or in groups, but it is important that they choose their own reading material. Have a "book corner" in the classroom where all the reading material is stored, and, at least for the time period in which SSR is being done, the books in the book corner should be easily accessible to the children. If a child is reluctant or unable to choose a book, help him make the choice. Children who are literate in their native language should be allowed to choose books in that language. Time spent reading in a first language is anything but time wasted. Many reading skills transfer from a first to a second language, and certainly the most valuable asset of a good reader--that of enjoying reading--is one that will be enhanced by letting the child read in his native language.

4. Read and Enjoy

When we say everybody in class reads, we mean *everybody*. On days that you will be doing SSR, bring your favorite reading material with you to class: a novel, a magazine, or a newspaper. This is your chance to catch up with your pleasure reading. As soon as the children are set with their books, pick your favorite corner of the mat, sit down with your favorite book, and enjoy.

5. Clean-Up

Signal to the class by means of a bell, a whistle, or a song, that reading time is over. Children should return their books to the book corner in an orderly fashion and return the set-up of the room to its usual classroom order.

6. Evaluation

As with any other literacy activity, students' performance must be constantly monitored. A rating scale similar to the one used for shared reading may be used (Form B). Every couple of weeks, at the end of the SSR period, you may also wish to call on children to share their book with others. The sharing can take the form of reading aloud or simply telling the story and pointing to the pictures illustrating it. In addition, you may wish to keep track of the books read by each student. You may use the checklist on Page 16 (Form B) to keep a record of students' performance.

FORM B

EVALUTATING SSR PERFORMANCE
(The REACH Scale)

Student Name	Week of:					Week of:					Week of:					Week of:					Week of:				
	R	E	A	C	H	R	E	A	C	H	R	E	A	C	H	R	E	A	C	H	R	E	A	C	H
1																									
2																									
3																									
4																									
5																									
6																									
7																									
8																									
9																									
10																									
11																									
12																									
13																									
14																									

Dimensions

R- Reading orally

E- Enthusiastic

A- Attentive

C- Choosing book easily

H- How many books read

Rate the REACH dimensions along the following scale:

1- Not able to/not at all

2- Adequate

3- Very/very much so

NA- Not Applicable

FORM B

Whole Language Methods that Promote Writing in L2

Four methods of developing writing skills in ESL that are based on the whole language approach are dictated stories, creative writing, story completion, and dialogue journal writing.

Dictated Stories

In the early stage of L2 development, when the children are at the preproduction stage, group writing activities such as those described in the LEA section are most appropriate (see previous section on composing a language experience story).

Creative Writing

The use of creative writing as a teaching tool is based on two premises: First, the essence of writing is to communicate ideas and feelings; second, children have a natural urge to creatively express their thoughts and feelings in "writing." In this approach, children are given the opportunity to write about anything they feel like writing about. They are encouraged to produce "written" language and, by means of feedback from the teachers, are led to organize their thoughts better and eventually to follow the conventional rules of writing. Grammar and spelling are explicitly taught only *after* children experience the thrill of uninhibitedly expressing themselves through writing.

Children taught in this way take pride in their work and in themselves. By using this approach, children's writing initially takes the form of drawing, which may be combined with squiggles representing verbal language. If children are exposed to enough written language--in the form of LEA stories or children's literature--and if the teacher gives the appropriate feedback, their mock-writing will gradually be transformed into acceptable forms of writing. In that process, children will follow their own unconventional rules of writing. They will also use invented spelling: TNK U FOR THE EARGS I JUS LUV THOS EARGS (Thank you for the earrings, I just love those earrings).

As in the case of oral language, children need to receive feedback regarding their production, and, similarly to oral language, the feedback given on writing must first focus on the content of the message and its meaning rather than on its form. Feedback can be given to children by means of "conferences," where the teacher reacts to a child's writing individually and comments orally on the piece that the child has produced. There are two types of conferences: content and process. In a content conference, the teacher comments on the ideas, the *what*; in a process conference, the teacher comments on the ways in which the piece is written, the *how*.

As with any writer, the child needs to share his product with others. Thus, a very important component of the creative writing approach is the "publishing" of children's work. A book or story written by the child may be photocopied, exhibited in an author's corner, or "sold" to another class.

How to do Creative Writing

1. Plan for the Writing Workshop

Make sure that there is a variety of paper and writing utensils (pencils, felt pens, crayons). Bring to class any visuals, such as magazine pictures, props, or toys to stimulate the imagination of those children who are unable to write spontaneously. You may also read a story to the students but stop before the end and have them write an ending, either individually or in groups.

2. Turn the Classroom into a Writing Workshop

Rearrange the furniture, if necessary, to give each child ample space to write in. Check that there is enough space for you to move around in, to have conferences with each child, and to do your own writing.

3. How to Start a Writing Workshop

At the beginning of a semester (cycle), it is necessary for you to model the creative writing process for the children. Start by sharing a personal story with the children: Tell them about something that happened to you, preferably in an area that interests children. Tell the children that you would like to write about that, and proceed to elicit from children topics of things that they would like to write about. If children respond in their native language, have your aide or one of your more proficient bilingual students translate.

4. Organizing Ideas

Allow the children some time to think about what they want to write. You may pair them up and have them tell each other their stories.

5. Writing

When children are ready to start writing their stories, let them write. If a child wishes, he or she may ask for assistance, either from the teacher, from another child, or a native speaker aide. If the children are independent enough to sit quietly in their seats and write by themselves, it is time for you to write too. Take advantage of this short time to write letters or anything else you may want to write for pleasure.

6. Have a Conference with Each Child

Once a child is finished writing, go to his or her desk and have a brief conference on the piece produced. Conferences do not need to take any longer than 2-3 minutes--nor can they, with 25 students to tend to! You do not need to have a conference with each child every day; if you get to each child once every 3 days you will be doing pretty well.

A Content Conference

The purpose of the content conference is to focus the child's attention *on the meaning being conveyed* in the piece he or she wrote. Try to draw the main points out, expand the details, and get the child to add to the story. With your questions, attempt to tighten the piece and focus it on its central theme. You may wish to follow these steps:

a. Ask the child what the piece is about.
b. Tell the child what you want to know more about.
c. Ask for (more) examples or for a continuation of the ideas presented.

After you have completed the content conference with one child, go on to the next child, and later or on a subsequent day return to each child and have a process conference.

A Process Conference

The purpose of the process conference is to focus the child's attention *on the techniques and strategies* used in writing. Draw the child's attention to what steps he or she took in order to produce the piece. You can ask the following questions to help the child become aware of the mechanics of writing:

a. Was it easy or hard to write this piece?
b. What did you do first?
c. Did you make any changes? (Children must be encouraged to make revisions.)
d. What would you like to change in this piece?
e. What would you do differently next time?

For children who are very limited in English proficiency, conferences may have to be limited to content, since the child would not have the language necessary to participate in a process conference.

7. Revision of Writing

Children must be encouraged to revise their writing, either on the basis of the conference they have had with the teacher or from talking to other children about their writing. Make sure that children have erasers, scissors, and tape to help them revise their pieces, i.e., cut and paste. Revision could be done on the same day that the child wrote the piece or preferably on a subsequent day.

8. Clean-Up

Signal to the class, by means of a bell, a whistle, or a song, that the writing workshop has ended. Children should return all unused paper and writing utensils to their proper storage area and should store their uncompleted work in its proper place. Completed work (see section below on publishing) should also be stored in the class "book corner" or exhibited on the wall.

9. Publish!

Two of the most rewarding consequences of writing are getting your work published and having others enjoy your writing. Children need to reap these rewards, too, so help them get published!

a. Plan ahead and take the children on a field trip to the photocopying machine (this would make a great LEA activity). Let children see their stories being copied for "publishing."
b. Have materials for making books available: heavy cardboard, needles, thread, stapler and staples, glue, assorted metal rings, brass fasteners, tape, cloth, paper scissors, markers, pencils, and crayons.
c. Create as many copies of the children's books as you need. Have children color the drawings. Cover each book with cardboard and have children decorate their books.

Dialogue Journal Writing

Dialogue Journal Writing is an approach in which students write regularly to the teacher in a bound notebook about a topic of their own choice, and the teacher writes back as an active participant in a written exchange that continues throughout the school year. This ongoing, daily writing consists of personally significant topics that in the beginning will be disconnected but may later on develop over time (Kreeft, et al., 1984). In dialogue journal interaction, writing is student-generated and functional, and the context for interaction non-threatening. Children are invited to write about topics that interest them, at their level of language proficiency--even if it is minimal.

The teacher responds to each student's entry individually, accommodating the language proficiency level of that student. The focus of dialogue journal interaction is on communication rather than form. The teacher, as well as the child, writes as a participant in a conversation between an adult and a child in which a genuine message is communicated instead of a teacher evaluating or commenting on a student's language. In the process of communication, however, the teacher's writing can serve as a language model for the child within the context of the message being communicated (Staton, et al., 1985). Dialogue journals also help create a strong emotional bond between teacher and child.

Dialogue journals are a practical instance of reading and writing bound together in a single functional experience. The language input the child receives from the teacher's entry is slightly beyond the student's language ability. As children read the teacher's guided responses to their own journal entries, they gradually adjust their writing by providing context and more information about their own experiences, thus improving their language skills. Journal entries by students may start with single words or pairs of words, but if the work that has been done with dialogue journals in many school districts is any indication, children's entries expand significantly by the end of the program. As in LEA stories, students' printed words become meaningful and personal, and comprehension is generally ensured.

How to Do Dialogue Journals

1. Plan to Get Started

See that each child has his or her own bound notebook with his/her name on it that will be used solely for journal writing. Through a native speaker aide, the children can be told that they are to write at least one idea or one thought each day in their notebook and give it to the teacher. Students must be assured that they can write anything they want in their journal, that only the teacher will see it, and that there are no correct or incorrect entries.

2. Make the First Entry

Collect the children's notebooks, making sure that each one has a name, and tell the children you will be writing each of them a message. The message you write to each child must be simple enough for the child to decipher (possibly with your help). Examples of initial journal entries follow:

Hello Sokhm, I'm happy you're in my class. Ms. Hernandez
Hello Thu, I like your drawing. Ms. Hernandez
Hello Danh, How many sisters do you have? Ms. Hernandez

Write clearly, in the same format as you would in a letter to a friend. Try to make your message as personal as possible, without spending too much time thinking about what to write to each child.

3. Distribute the Notebooks

Return the notebooks to the children, and make sure they understand that they are to write back to you at least one thought. A native speaker aide might be used to convey this message to the children. It must be made clear that children are not to copy either what you have written or anything from a book or anywhere else. Two words that the child spontaneously writes to express a feeling or an idea are worth much more than many perfectly copied sentences.

4. Collect the Notebooks

Notebooks are collected daily, with new entries, and the process is repeated every day, five days a week.

5. Respond to Children's Entries

Write a response to each child. It doesn't have to be long at all. In fact, for beginning level students, your response should not exceed a 5-6 word sentence. Write in complete sentences and in language that is grammatically acceptable, but keep it simple. Remember, most importantly, not to respond to the *form* of an entry but only to the message. Also, keep in mind that a journal is something that only you and the child share.

Activities that Relate Reading and Writing

Many of the literacy activities outlined in this teacher's guide seek to strengthen the relationship between reading and writing. The Language Experience Approach does so by allowing students to read their own productions: They can see their own oral language written down and subsequently read the story. In creative writing, students are asked to share their writing with others, and in doing so they may "read" what they wrote. Thus, in both of these approaches children are prompted to read their own writing. In daily journal writing, students read what another person has written in response to their own productions.

In addition to these approaches linking reading and writing, students may do extensions of shared reading and sustained silent reading which combine reading and writing activities. These activities are described in the following section.

Extensions of Shared Reading and Sustained Silent Reading

After children have read a book, either in a group or on their own, they can adapt the plots of the stories they read or create new plots based on those stories.

Adapted Plot Writing

Any of the following ideas may be used for adapting plots:

1. Renaming characters or the central focus of the story: For example, in the story entitled *The Big Toe*, ask children to think about what would happen if the old woman found a big nose. Let them write a new story.
2. Changing the type of the characters in the story: For example, in *The Hungry Giant*, what if the giant was very sleepy or very bored?
3. Changing events: For example, in *Grandpa, Grandpa*, what if the little girl wanted to go to the market instead of fishing?

Plot Creation

Children extend a story they have read by taking it back in time or taking it into the future. For example, in *The Night of the Ooley Bugs*, have children write a story about what happened the night before the Ooley Bugs came out of the ground.

Producing Books in Class

After the children have written a story, they can make a big book or a regular-sized book. Big books are easier to produce in that they involve gross motor skills, and it is possible to involve many more students in the process than smaller books. Here are some steps to follow in order to produce a big book:

1. Prepare the following materials: butcher block paper, thick felt markers, ruler, crayons and pencils, regular-sized paper, one piece of pliable cardboard or construction paper the same size as the butcher block paper, yarn and a big sewing needle.
2. Help students write the whole story on one piece of butcher block paper. This will make it easier for them to map out the eventual distribution of the story over the pages of the book. If the story the students have just created differs very little from the original one, follow the same format as the original. If, on the other hand, the new story deviates from the original one, you can discuss the advantages of one format over another.
3. Decide how sentences will be distributed on the pages, and make a smaller version of the book on regular-sized paper. Calculate the number of sheets needed by dividing the number of pages by four. (Each sheet of paper will produce four pages by folding each sheet in half).
4. Students may wish to indicate what the illustration will look like on each page by making a mock-up drawing.

5. Have a small group of students plan the cover of the book.
6. You are now ready to start making a big book. Distribute a sheet of butcher block paper to each small group of students along with one of the mock-up sheets.
7. Have one group of students make the cover, using construction paper or pliable cardboard.
8. Assemble the book by stitching down the middle.
9. Enjoy reading your very own book!

Additional Ideas for Reading and Writing

1. Make up a riddle about the main character or title of a book.
2. Make a puppet of the main character and use it to tell the story.
3. Describe your character in four sentences and see if the class can figure it out.
4. Make a mobile to represent a story.
5. Make an illustration of your favorite part of a story.
6. Construct something that is part of a story, e.g., a house that one of the characters lives in, a model of the transportation mode they use.
7. Put on a puppet show of your favorite story.
8. Make a timeline showing the most important events in the life of a character in a story.
9. Take a story and write it like a poem.
10. Draw a portrait of the main character.
11. Collect your favorite poems over a period of time, copy them in a notebook and illustrate each.
12. Make up an advertisement to "sell" your book.
13. Select a story and practice telling it so you don't need to read it as you show the pictures.
14. Pantomime a story as it is being read.
15. Take a poem or nursery rhyme and write it like a story.
16. Make a present for the main character in a story.
17. Make your character out of cardboard with moveable parts.
18. Make a list of things you like about a character; also name things you don't like.
19. Interview the main character in a story.
20. Write another ending to the story.
21. Make a medal which a character in a story might have won.
22. Plan a dinner that a character in a story would really like.
23. Make masks to represent the characters in a story.
24. Make a list of 10 things a character in a story would like.
25. Write a letter to a character asking questions which weren't answered in the book.
26. Design a new cover for a book.

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